



UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

And the Winners Are...

Congratulations to the winners of the 2003 Tourism Awards. Governor Judy Martz and the Governor's Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) presented the awards at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation closing banquet Tuesday, March 25.

Volunteer Tourism Person of the Year—Diane Brandt, Glasgow

Diane Brandt was recognized for her commitment to preserve and promote tourism attractions in northeastern Montana. Brandt served on the Governor-appointed Tourism Advisory Council for twelve years and was a former member of the Missouri River Country Board of Directors.

Tourism Person of the Year—Linda Anderson, Bigfork

Linda Anderson, Executive Director of Glacier Country, was honored for her dedication to marketing Montana and Glacier Country as a destination for all walks of life. Her marketing efforts are consistently innovative and serve to raise the bar for other tourism organizations.

Montana Tourism Community of the Year Award—Bigfork

The northwestern Montana community was recognized for its annual "Christmas in Bigfork" celebration and promotional efforts of a group of volunteer community members in building a major tourism destination.

Two new awards were added this year. The Tourism Event of the Year is presented to an outstanding event that has benefited the community and state in an exemplary and creative manner. The Tourism Partnership Award recognizes contributions by two or more businesses or organizations which combine their resources in creative, innovative ways to promote tourism in Montana.

Tourism Event of the Year—"What the Hay" Contest (Utica)

The idea to decorate hay bales began as a practical joke between two ranchers in 1989. The contest now attracts bumper-to-bumper traffic from Windham through Utica to Hobson, three ranching communities in the Judith Basin. The contest has grown to over 50 entries and nearly 10,000 visitors. The contest is held the first Sunday after Labor Day each year.

Tourism Partnership Award—Half Moon Ranch Cattle Drive and Montana Farm Bureau

In 1989, Art and Eileen Nelson began offering visitors the opportunity to join them when they moved their cattle between their winter and summer ranches in the Lewistown and Lavina areas. They recently teamed up with the Montana Farm Bureau to expand the drive. Now the Montana Farm Bureau provides the administration and in return the Nelsons donate a large portion of their proceeds to the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer & Rancher program. This allows Montana youth the opportunity to participate in agricultural

forums and programs. Last year they were able to donate \$10,000 to the fund.

Warm Season Conversion Study Available

Department of Commerce Travel Montana 2002 television advertising influenced viewers to inquire about Montana and subsequently 28% of them visited Big Sky Country according to the recent Montana Warm Season Per Inquiry Television Campaign Conversion Study. Visitors responding to the ads spent an average of \$1,620 per trip last summer and fall.

"The goal was to measure the effectiveness of our current advertising and fulfillment strategies in generating visitation, and thus revenue, to Montana," said Betsy Baumgart, Administrator for the Department of Commerce Promotion Division. "We never want to take for granted the monies that are entrusted to us; this type of study helps us analyze campaign results and thus ensures that doesn't happen."

According to Sarah Lawlor, the Department of Commerce Travel Montana Consumer Marketing Manager, the study confirmed Montana's total marketing package is paying off for the state. "Not only did the advertising cause people to inquire, the information packet we sent influenced them to stay longer and take part in more activities. That makes a difference when, as the data reveals, they are spending an average of \$360 per day."

NFO Plog Research surveyed 406 people via telephone who responded to Montana's television ads during the spring of 2002. The survey results reinforced the conclusion that per-inquiry television inquirers are high-value visitors.

The study also reported that 25% of the respondents came to sightsee. Another 21% visited friends or attended a family event. Relaxation and "escape" totaled 14%, and recreation activities added up to 13%.

Did You Know?

- Congratulations to Glacier Country for winning a 2002 HSMIA Travel Competition Bronze Award for advertising excellence for a direct mail piece. Linda Anderson, executive director of Glacier Country, credits teamwork between H2O Advertising and the Glacier Country marketing committee for the win. HSMIA is the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International.
- *Montana The Magazine of Western History* won the Theodore C. Blegen Award from The Forest History Society for the article by Sara E. Dant Ewart entitled "Evolution of an Environmentalist: Senator Frank Church and the Hells Canyon Controversy," published in the Spring 2001 issue.

Averaging 4.5 nights per visit, these Montana visitors typically stayed in a hotel or motel. Campgrounds ranked second, and staying with friends and relatives was third.

Of particular note, 92% of the visitors said they plan to come back again. And the people who didn't visit after they made their inquiry? Four out of five of them said they hope to visit in the next two years. The full study is available at www.travel.montana.state.mt.us/research.

National Lewis and Clark Symposium

The first major Montana event commemorating the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition is being held May 28-30 at The University of Montana-Missoula.

Between 500 and 1,000 participants are expected for "A Confluence of Cultures: Native Americans and the Expedition of Lewis and Clark." The three-day symposium will offer a uniquely Indian perspective on the Corps of Discovery and its pivotal impact on American history.

Organized by UM and the Montana Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission, the symposium is open to all and designed to stimulate learning through lectures, cultural presentations, art exhibits and more.

The fee is \$25 before April 27 and \$40 thereafter. Registration information is available online at www.umt.edu/cultures or contact Linda Juneau at (406) 243-6093, email: cultures@mso.umt.edu.

Film Office Update

The Department of Commerce Montana Film Office, along with partners in Wyoming, Idaho and South Dakota, has been co-sponsoring the Independent Feature

Project (IFP) *Directors Series*. IFP is a non-profit foundation for writers, directors and producers. Among other programs, the series hosts educational discussions for filmmakers; panelists include successful directors, writers, and producers.

This sponsorship has helped gain access to Hollywood decision makers and creative talent. In addition to providing a booth exhibit at a reception for panelists and more than 200 attendees, Montana has been able to personally market locations to the panelists prior to the event. The film office has attended the first and third of the series.

The third panel (March 12) featured the director, writer, cinematographer, and producer of the Montana-made movie, *Northfork*. During the program, the filmmakers discussed clips of the movie. Sten Iversen, manager of the Department of Commerce Montana Film Office, said, "It was like a commercial for Montana. They spoke very highly of their experience shooting here, commenting especially on the beauty and the hard working crew members." *Northfork* shot in the Great Falls/Augusta/Glasgow area during spring of 2002.

FWP Seeks Grant Proposals

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking project proposals from local public outdoor recreation programs that would qualify for federal Land & Water Conservation funding. Typical facilities eligible include ball fields, campgrounds, golf courses, ice-skating ponds, picnic facilities, tennis courts, playground equipment, and hiking trails. There are two grant categories: less than \$25,000 and \$25,000 + (maximum of \$75,000 per project). Project applications are due July 1.

Detailed information is available at <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/> on the Parks page under Grants, or call the Montana State Parks office at 406-444-3750.

Updated Lewis & Clark Brochure

"Lewis & Clark: The Montana Journey" brochure has been updated and is ready for distribution. The new brochure includes information on Montana's two national signature events, "Explore! the Big Sky," June 1 - July 4, 2005 in Great Falls and Fort Benton, and "Clark on the Yellowstone," July 22-25, 2006 at Pompeys Pillar near Billings.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

April

- 5-8 RMI Round-Up, Rapid City, SD (*International Group*)
Locations Trade Show 2003, Los Angeles, CA (*Montana Film Office*)
- 13-16 Lewis & Clark Bicentennial National Convention, Great Falls
- 21 2004-2005 Meeting Planner's Guide DEADLINE to purchase advertising

May

- 17-21 TIA's International Pow Wow, St. Louis (*International Group*)
- 28-30 "Confluence of Cultures" National Lewis & Clark Symposium, Missoula

June

- 1-3 Tourism Advisory Council Meeting, Kalispell-WestCoast Outlaw Hotel
- 23-27 TIA's See America Media Marketplace and UK sales calls, London (*International Group*)

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:
travelmontana.state.mt.us.



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